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EARLY CHRISTIANITY

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EARLY CHRISTIANITY

By
S^{amuel} B^{enjamin} SLACK, M.A.

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Ich habe nun die lebhafteste Empfindung, wie schwierig es für uns Menschen einer anderen Zeit ist, diesen raschen Blick auf das Urchristentum vom Standpunkte des antiken Menschen zu werfen, und ich werde gern bereit sein, mich belehren zu lassen, wenn ich falsch gesehen haben sollte. DEISSMANN.

Der Christuskult ist nicht matte Reflexion über 'historische' Tatsachen, sondern pneumatische Gemeinschaft mit dem Gegenwärtigen. THE SAME.

Nicht als Erlösungsreligion wie man heute gern sagt, sondern als Erlöserkult hat das junge Christentum die Herzen erobert. THE SAME.

PREFACE

A VERY short preface will suffice for this little sketch of early Christianity. The difficulties of the task are many. First of all readers will in most cases begin with their beliefs already formed. If the subject had been Confucianism, for example, the reader would start with an open mind, and when he laid the book down, would be grateful no doubt for any new information he had acquired. In the present case the author has a less welcome task: he may have to eradicate old ideas as well as implant new ones. Another difficulty is to compress the material into the compass of a small volume. Many points have been omitted altogether. No allusion is made, for example, to the Cosmic aspect of the Logos (Rom. 8^{21, 22}). Thirdly, our knowledge of the period is still imperfect; future investigations will undoubtedly add to our information. Many people will be surprised to learn that it is only within recent years that

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scholars have understood the relation of the Greek of the New Testament to other forms of the Greek language. Two sources of new light may be mentioned here. One is the study of Comparative Religion; practices which by themselves are obscure, frequently become clear when compared with corresponding practices elsewhere. A simple example is the modern custom of wearing black, when a friend has been lost by death. When we compare the customs of other times and other nations under similar circumstances, we find that some people wear white clothes or smear themselves with yellow ochre; in some tribes the men disguise themselves as women; or again, after a funeral they enter the house by the back door, or take refuge in a subterraneous cave. The meaning is now apparent. All these steps are taken in order that the ghost of the dead man may be baffled. Thus light is thrown upon primitive ideas about the dead. We see (1) that the activity of each individual is supposed to continue even after death; (2) that this activity is likely to be of a malevolent character; and (3) that the ghost can easily be cheated by the most transparent devices. Incidentally we also see the reason for other practices, such as the bolting and barring of windows and doors after a death has

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taken place; in modern times it is thought sufficient to draw the blinds: the origin of this custom is now clear. Of still more importance than the contributions of this new study of Comparative Religion are the results of recent archaeological research in the East—especially in Egypt. These investigations have brought to light many striking parallels both to the language and the matter of the New Testament. Papyri—*i.e.* books written on rolls of papyrus—have been found, containing fragments of Christian documents which were supposed to be irretrievably lost. This field has not yet been exhausted; it is possible that the future may have still greater surprises in store. The recent establishment of a chair of Papyrology at Oxford is a hopeful and encouraging sign. Unfortunately the labourers in this field are few. The time seems to have arrived when the study of the Greek and Latin languages at our older universities ought to be pursued upon broader lines. Few students, when they leave the University, are capable of dealing with authors like Clement, Origen, or even Plutarch—much less with the Greek of the papyri. How fertile such a study may be, can be seen from Deissmann's *Licht vom Osten*. It is truly delightful to see Theology and Scholarship shaking

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hands, as it were, as they do in this book. Soltau compares them to two companies of miners who have started from opposite ends to make a tunnel through a mountain. Now at last the two parties hear one another's voices through a thin partition. When will the study of the first two or three centuries of our era include the Christian documents and become a regular subject for classical students at our universities? How strikingly, for example, the two ages—the old age of scepticism and the new age of faith—are seen overlapping one another in Lucian's *Philopseudes*! There is perhaps hardly any other period which reminds us so often of our own time. It is a discouraging thought that such giants of intellect as Valentine, Origen, and Plotinus remain almost unknown to the majority of our scholars. Moreover why should not classical students at our universities—as Fiebig and Gunkel suggest—add to their Greek and Latin at least one Oriental language, *e.g.* Syriac, Hebrew, Old Persian, or Assyrian (*i.e.* Babylonian)?

S. B. SLACK.

September 21, 1908.

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I

WESTERN CHRISTIANITY AND EASTERN CHRISTIANITY, MODERN RELIGION AND ANCIENT RELIGION, MYSTERY AND MAGIC IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

NOTE.—The name Jehovah is written Jahveh.

The words 'psyche' and 'pneuma' are sometimes used in their original form; they correspond more or less to the English 'soul' and 'spirit.'

The following Epistles of Paul are regarded as genuine by conservative scholars:—1 and 2 Thess., 1 and 2 Cor., Gal., Rom., Philipp., Philemon, Col., and perhaps Eph.

Introductory.—The student who wishes to understand what early Christianity was, must begin by realising two things—first, that the Christianity of the East has never been quite the same as that of the West; and secondly, that the Christianity of the West has undergone many modifications since its introduction. One great turning point—the Reformation—is familiar to all, but in reality the process of change has been continuous; theological teaching has always found itself obliged to adapt the old doctrines to new conceptions. As a matter of fact, the change

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which took place at the Reformation, was of less importance in the history of dogmatic theology than others that might be mentioned.

Let us first of all try to distinguish between the theology of the East and that of the West. Western theology has devoted itself principally to (1) the Doctrine of the Trinity; and (2) the Doctrine of Sin and Grace. The first was borrowed from the East, but it has never developed on quite the same lines in the Eastern and Western Churches. The teaching of Abelard (condemned after the Synod of Sens in 1141), which emphasised the human personality of Jesus, is an example of a tendency which is more characteristic of the West than the East. The second doctrine, however, that of Sin and Grace, has been the centre of theological discussion in the Western Church — Protestant as well as Catholic. Its founder was St. Augustine, who did not shrink from maintaining the most extreme positions if they followed logically from his premises. The teaching of St. Augustine was somewhat modified in succeeding centuries, but to the practical mind of the West the whole question of Sin and Grace has always been a centre of interest, and remains so to this day.

In the East, theological speculation has been

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most fruitful over two questions ; first, that of the Trinity ; and secondly, connected therewith, that of the Incarnation ; in the East, Athanasius plays the same part as Augustine in the West. To Athanasius the reality of the redemption of man is dependent upon the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ. In laying this down he only gives expression to the demands of the religious consciousness of the East. An elaborate ritual is developed, which helps the worshipper by the mysterious awe which it inspires, to understand better what is meant by the pure spiritual life which he will lead in a future world : perfect union with God is the goal of his desires. Christ forms, as it were, the bridge by which the two worlds—the divine and human—are connected. In the Sacraments the mystery of the Incarnation is repeated. That the worship of the Eastern Church has points of contact with the ancient Mysteries, and even Greek theatrical representations, is not to be disputed. It is characteristic of the difference between the two Churches that whereas in the West heresy has usually taken the form of opposition to Papal authority, the heretics of the East (*e.g.*, the Bogomiles) rejected the Sacraments.

Religious Groundwork. — Athanasius and

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Augustine, however, belong to the fourth century. Let us go back to Apostolic times—say, the middle of the first century A.D., for which the earlier books of the New Testament are our principal authority. What features do we find there more or less foreign to our modern conception of Christianity? We may enumerate three which particularly strike the reader of the New Testament.—(1) First of all, between God and man lay an intermediate world (or state) peopled by spirits, good and bad, but mostly the latter. To a modern man a spirit is something intangible, a mere abstraction. To the New Testament writers they were very real, and the seer could both see them and communicate with them (Mk. 5⁹; Mk. 1²⁶; Lk. 10¹⁸). The life of the Christian is a constant struggle against the malign influence of these evil spirits. The keynote, in fact, of early Christianity is that given in Eph. 6¹², ‘For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.’ It is against these powers that Christ wages unceasing warfare; see Col. 2¹⁵; 1 Cor. 15²⁴, where the words translated ‘rule and authority’ are the same as those translated ‘principalities and powers’ in the passage from Eph. To quote Wernle: ‘These

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naïve conceptions find their way even into theological thought; the whole doctrine of redemption and salvation, as well as that of inspiration, stands and falls in its ecclesiastical form with this primitive and absurd psychology.' It follows from all this that the attitude of the early Christian teachers towards the heathen—*e.g.*, Greek and Roman—gods was not sceptical; they did not tell the heathen that their gods were a delusion, but rather that they need not worship them, need not bring them offerings to appease them, since the Christian was able to triumph over them and defy them (1 Cor. 10²⁰; 1 Cor. 8⁵). To us it is difficult to conceive of such personalities. They have 'bodies,' but not fleshly bodies; this distinction is carefully observed in the New Testament (1 Cor. 15⁴⁰⁻⁴⁴; in this last passage, by the bye, not only is the 'natural' (better 'psychic') body different from the 'spiritual' (or 'pneumatic') body, but both are different from the fleshly body). Heitmüller says: 'Although it is true that the spirit is to be regarded as an inward spiritual entity, and its workings are to be regarded as having an inward spiritual character, nevertheless it is equally certain that in Paul spiritual processes are far from having the same transcendental-ideal character as in modern

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philosophy. In particular, it is clear from the way in which Paul speaks of the working of the Spirit that this Spirit is an objective reality, and that it cannot be understood without the assumption of a material-immaterial principle.' Feine sums up as follows: 'That the doctrine of the spirit in Paul has a sensible material side cannot be denied.' In other words, spirit is only matter of a finer quality, just as ordinary matter also has its grades of fineness, as Paul takes pains to explain (1 Cor. 15³⁹). The student should remember that these spirits are often meant, when he might imagine that human beings are spoken of (*e.g.*, 1 Tim. 4¹); so, too, in 1 Cor. 2⁸ there is no reference made to Pilate and Caiaphas; compare also Jo. 12³¹, 14³⁰, 16¹¹. (2) Intimately connected with the above belief is the belief in the efficacy of mystical or magical rites and ceremonies. Two of these we may mention here, as they are still regarded by the English Church as 'generally necessary to salvation'—the Lord's Supper and Baptism. Most people at the present time would regard these rites as merely symbolical, but in the early Church this was by no means the case; nor were they the only Sacraments with a mystical significance. 'These Sacraments'—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—'could hardly be surpassed in

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impressiveness by any other mysteries ; Baptism, which was conferred in realistic manner by the complete immersion of the candidate, implied and effected purification from all sin ; at the Lord's Supper the Bread and Wine of which the Christian partook were a heavenly food and drink, elements of Divine Life, which were able to transform this mortal to an immortal body ' (Harnack). First of all, the Lord's Supper. Examples are to be found elsewhere of the idea that a deity may enter into the being of an animal (sacrificial victim) or human captive, or an image in dough made to represent a human being. The feasters who partook of any of these were supposed thereby to partake of the nature of the God whom they worshipped. An example of the first would be the Thracian worship of Dionysus Sabazius. Among Arabs and other Semitic peoples even participation in the same meal brings about a sort of blood-relationship (compare Apoc. 3²⁰). The idea, no doubt, is that the life resides in the blood of the animal which is consumed, and thus a community of life is established among those who partake of that animal. This is why the tie of hospitality is so sacred among Arabs : even a bitter foe becomes sacred after he has shared the board of his enemy. That ideas of this kind,

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though not these alone, have been at work in the period of the formation of the Christian Church, cannot be doubted. An institution similar to the Lord's Supper is known to have existed among the contemporary worshippers of Mithras. Justin Martyr is our authority for this, and he explains it by saying that 'wicked demons had imitated the Christian rites.' But if we study St. Paul's Epistles we see that the above ideas will also explain his attitude upon the all-important question of things sacrificed to idols, on which question, however, he is more tolerant than Apoc. 2²⁰. Why are the converts forbidden to take part in these heathen sacrificial meals? Because they thereby take into themselves the nature of the 'demons' to whom sacrifice is made. (This is no doubt also the explanation of Is. 65⁴ and 66¹⁷.) This is the meaning of 1 Cor. 10²⁰: 'But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.' But further, to partake of the table of the Lord itself might be dangerous and even fatal if any one partook of it 'unworthily' (1 Cor. 11²⁹). Let us illustrate this

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by a passage from the 'Acts of Thomas' (501): 'Now there was there a young man who had committed a crime'—he had murdered a woman—'and he, too, came and partook of the Eucharist, and both his hands became withered, so that he could not move either of them to his mouth.' The same thing is found in the New Testament in 1 Cor. 11³⁰; the English version is a little obscure, but the meaning is that many had fallen sick and died for the reason mentioned in verse 29. We are reminded of a story told by Pausanias. At Aigira in Achaia there was an oracular shrine of Ge; before prophesying, the priestess had to drink of bull's blood; if she had broken her vow of chastity she died after the draught. 'Here we see at a glance the magical character of the sacrifice; the blood of the victim contained a power which might be either salutary or injurious, and which was harmful to all who were not properly fitted to partake of it.'—Kroll. The passage from Cor. will help to illustrate Jo. 13^{26, 27}: 'And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him' (cp. Acts 1¹⁸).¹ The Lord's Supper must

¹ It will be observed that the passage from Pausanias enables us to connect the death of the traitor Judas with the death of the traitor Themistocles.

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be carefully distinguished from the Agape or Love Feast (Jude 12, etc.). We find the idea of a solemn meal constantly recurring in the New Testament, *e.g.*, in the Feeding of the Five Thousand (or the Four Thousand), in Jo. 21 and in Apoc. 19⁹. Some of these may be connected with the Messianic meal (Lk. 14¹⁵); in others the meal may be Eucharistic. As for the Agapae, they hardly existed as a regular institution after the fourth century. Transubstantiation—the word first occurs in the twelfth century; for once the Latins have invented a new word without copying a Greek model—only became a dogma of the Latin Church in 1215; but the belief is much older, and for the Greek Church at all events has existed since John of Damascus (eighth century).

Baptism has always combined in itself various meanings; the form in which the rite has been celebrated has also varied much at different times and in different places. As a theological problem it occupied the attention of St. Augustine in the West and St. Cyril in the East. That it was not an original production of Christianity appears even from the New Testament. That Christ himself did not baptize perplexed the Church from a very early date, and it is possible that the narrative in Jo. 13⁴ foll. was intended to

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supply the deficiency. In still later writings we hear of the Baptism of Mary. But the rite was older even than John the Baptist; the Jews had their baths of purification, and the classical student will call to mind instances among Greeks and Romans of lustration before prayer. The elaborate rites of exorcism which precede the ceremony in more recent times have no counterpart in the earliest period; the idea apparently is that evil spirits must be driven out in order that Christ when he enters may find the house 'swept and garnished.' The ceremony of consecration of the water by prayer was known to the ancient Assyrians; 'the modern custom of consecration,' says Kroll, 'differs in no respect from this ancient Pagan practice.' The idea no doubt is that the Spirit should come down and enter into the matter of the water. (Cp. Jo. 5⁴.) Thus baptism may also be efficacious for the cure of diseases. This was a belief of the Church in the time of St. Augustine.

That baptism was not merely a symbolical rite but had a mystical, magical power is clear even from the New Testament. Only thus can we explain the custom of being baptized for the dead; see 1 Cor. 15²⁹, where with singularly inverted logic it is used as an argument for the

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immortality of the soul. In the *Shepherd of Hermas* (Lightfoot's trans.) we read: 'The apostles and the teachers who preached the name of the Son of God'—more about the 'name' later on—'after they had fallen asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached also to them that had fallen asleep before them and themselves gave unto them the seal of the preaching. Therefore they went down with them into the water and came up again. But these went down alive and again came up alive; whereas the others that had fallen asleep before them went down dead and came up alive.' This is to us a new and strange picture of a future life; the unbaptized have no conscious existence after death till the arrival of the Apostles, who baptize them. The *Shepherd of Hermas* is supposed by Zahn to have been written at the end of the first century; the book has had a chequered history; some of the Fathers ranked it with Holy Scripture, and as a matter of fact it is found in the Sinai manuscript of the New Testament. Athanasius regarded it as a useful book for candidates for baptism, and Pope Gelasius (492-496) found it necessary to pronounce that it was uncanonical. Closely connected with baptism is the ceremony of anointing with oil, which often formed part of the baptismal rites.

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The use of oil was very natural since the name Christ means 'anointed.' Here, too, the mystical, magical transformation of the element is the subject of a prayer in the Acts of Thomas (540, Raabe's translation); according to Preuschen this prayer is probably taken from a very ancient ritual: ('And Judas'—*i.e.* Thomas, 'the twin brother of the Lord,'—'took oil in a silver vessel and thus he spake): O Power of the Cross, whereby men, if they anoint themselves with thee, overcome their enemies; thou, who art a crown of victory to conquerors; thou seal and joy of the weary; thou who hast brought to mankind the Gospel of their salvation; thou who dost show light unto them that are in darkness; thou, whose leaves are bitter but whose fruit is sweet; thou who dost appear weak but by the excellence of thy power dost contain the all-seeing power; O Jesus, may thy victorious power come and may it enter into this oil, even as it came down into the Cross, which hath fellowship therewith; may the grace come whereby thou didst breathe upon thy foes, so that they went back and fell to the ground' (Jo. 18⁶), 'and may it dwell in this oil over which we name Thine Holy Name.' The custom of extreme unction is still retained by the Catholic Church;

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the object is to protect the soul against evil spirits after death; in all probability the rite was borrowed from the Gnostics (so Kroll), though Catholic theologians try to take refuge in James 5¹⁴, which, however, refers rather to the healing of a disease. Irenaeus says of the Marcosii: 'When a man dies they mix oil with water and apply it to the head of the departed, others use the myrrh called opobalsamum'—in the Romish church also the oil is mixed with balsam—'in order forsooth'—here the Father's indignation at such superstitious beliefs breaks out,—'that they may become invincible and may be invisible to the principalities and powers of the other world.'

(3) A third feature of early Christian belief, connecting it with the world of magic, is the importance of names. Qualities of divine beings are often regarded as possessing an independent existence. An example in the Wisdom of Solomon (18¹⁵): 'Then Thy Almighty Word leapt down from heaven from Thy royal throne, like a fierce warrior, into the midst of a land devoted to destruction,' etc. The same personification is found in Is. 55¹¹, though here the English version makes this obscure by using the pronoun 'it' instead of 'he.' So, too, the 'Wisdom of God' is personified in Lk. 11⁴⁹, and elsewhere in

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the New Testament. The conception is quite foreign to modern habits of thought, and yet it is at the root of one of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. In the Fourth Gospel we read not merely that the Word was a Person but that 'The Word was *made Flesh* and dwelt among us,' (Jo. 1¹⁴). We have here no doubt a bold attempt to combine the idea of a living Messiah with doctrines of current speculative philosophy. To return, however, to names. The Name of God is also, like the qualities mentioned above, detached as it were, and invested with a separate personality. In Is. 30²⁷, we find: 'Behold the Name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy; his lips are full of indignation and his tongue as a devouring fire.' When we read in ancient Semitic documents that Astarte is the Name of Baal, this means that the Name of Baal (personified) is identified with Astarte; we have parallels in Ex. 23²¹ and Jer. 16²¹. But further; the pronunciation of the Name has a mystical (or magical) effect. Origen admits this, and points out that the names of deities are not translated but taken over into other languages, in their original form. Thus when Jacob wrestles with the angel (*i.e.*, with Jahveh) he desires only to

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know his name (cp. Apoc. 3¹²). The idea is that one who is in possession of the name of a God can secure his help and presence. Similarly in Amos 6¹⁰ when Jahveh had visited his backsliding people with a pestilence, the Israelite is warned not to mention the name of his God. Why? Because he would thereby call back the God to more acts of destruction. Corresponding ideas about the mystical (or magical) efficacy of names occur in the New Testament. Miracles are performed by the mere pronunciation of the Name, for this is the meaning of the expression 'casting out devils in the name of Jesus.' It is to be observed that any one in possession of the name—whether a believer or not—may use it for that purpose (Lk. 9⁴⁹; Acts 19¹³; other examples of the name of Jesus, Acts 9^{15, 34}; 10⁴³; 16¹⁸). Hence, too, the use of the name at baptism; we find here in the original Greek three different prepositions: the candidate is baptized either *in* the name or *into* the name or *on* the name. The meaning is that the ceremony was accompanied by the utterance of the name. The baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is later: the primitive form in Acts 8¹⁶. Mt. 28¹⁹ is also very late; perhaps not earlier than the end of the third century.

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Not only the name of the God but also that of the individual was of more than ordinary significance, and was therefore a potent instrument in the working of wonders. The change of a name involved the destruction of the thing or person named (Is. 65¹⁵); the utterance of the name called them into being; thus probably is to be explained the idea of the creation in Gen. 1³; (perhaps also Gen. 2¹⁹). When the Church hymn says:—

‘When creation’s work begun,
When God spake and it was done,’

the modern reader takes the words in a figurative sense; in the original they were meant literally. In the New Testament the utterance of the name is an essential part of the raising of Tabitha and Lazarus (Acts 9⁴⁰; Jo. 11⁴³). Similarly the words by which a cure is performed are given in the original Aramaic, because they would not possess the same virtue when translated into another language (Mk. 5⁴¹; 7³⁴). So also a curse becomes efficacious by being pronounced. Instructive is Lev. 19¹⁴, ‘Thou shalt not curse the deaf.’ This is compared with putting an obstacle in the way of the blind; the deaf man is unable to take steps to protect himself against the curse.

An illustration of the superstitious importance attached to names is found in Tac. *Hist.* 4⁵³,

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where only soldiers with 'fausta nomina' were allowed to be present at the dedication of the Capitoline Temple. The change of name at baptism, confirmation, entrance of monastic order, etc., is perhaps due to the idea that the assumption of names like Daniel, Peter, etc., makes a man a partaker in the virtues of those saints and heroes; it may also be influenced by the belief that the possession of a new name makes him unrecognisable to malevolent spirits. How else are we to explain the custom of giving new names to the dead, a practice which dates back perhaps to the first century? So, too, the Jews since the twelfth century have sometimes adopted the practice of giving a new name to a sick person, evidently in order to deceive the demon which has caused the disease.

We have dwelt on these points at length, because it is necessary that the student should realise that the whole mental atmosphere in which the early Christians lived, is different from that to which he has been accustomed. Filled with political and academic enthusiasms, he supposes that Paul is a successor of the Greek philosophers, or that Jesus and his Apostles came as social reformers; as a matter of fact even ethical—much less philosophic—teaching is not

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the most prominent feature of the Pauline epistles. as we shall see perhaps later on; still less is the 'duty of discontent' one of the doctrines of the New Testament.

Many other phenomena of the New Testament are based on the belief in magic, but they need not be described in detail; such are the works of healing, magical transference from one place to another (Acts 8 ^{39, 40}; Jo. 6 ²¹; Mk. 1 ¹²), and—what is most difficult, but not impossible, to parallel—the glossolaly or speaking with tongues. The prayers for rain and fine weather in the Anglican prayer book remain to show that modern Christianity has not yet divested itself entirely of this belief in magic.

II

THE GOSPELS AND THE LIFE OF JESUS

Life of Jesus and the Gospels.—We cannot understand the religious ideas underlying Christianity without considering the all-important question of the life of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. Perhaps the principal critical problem is the question of the Messiahship. What was the conception of the Messiahship in the Old Testament? The people of Israel, oppressed and exiled, nevertheless looked forward to a restoration of the old national life—the kingdom of David. This hope they thought that they had realised when they returned to their own country, and in their joy they identified Cyrus with the promised Christ (Is. 45¹). They were soon undeceived by Cambyses; the absence of the name of Cambyses from the Old Testament is the best proof of the hatred which he inspired. Gradually the conception of a coming victorious Messiah who would deliver Israel from its foes, becomes an event of the distant future

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But the hopes of the people are still fixed on the happiness and the restoration, not of the individual but of the nation; moreover the kingdom is to be an earthly kingdom—a kingdom of this world, not an imaginary heaven. By slow degrees this nationalism gives place to a new individualism; the Israelites themselves become separated into two classes, the righteous and the ungodly. This is the key to a good many characteristic utterances of the Old Testament, which took its present shape in this period. The prosperity of the wicked caused much bitter reflection to the faithful; we find it as early as the 73rd Psalm, the author of which feels most acutely the want of a conception of a future life in which these inequalities are redressed. In Daniel (about B.C. 165) the Messiah idea is still further developed. The new kingdom will be established by a Man who shall come down from heaven and destroy the heathen. This conception traces out the outline which succeeding prophets filled in. Daniel even makes provision for a reward of the righteous and punishment of the wicked; this is limited, however, to the belief that a few of the more fearless martyrs of his day might be raised from the dead to enjoy the glories of the new kingdom, while a few of the more outrageously

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wicked might also come back for punishment (Dan. 12²). Such is the primitive form in which the dogmas of the modern Christian creed—the second coming and resurrection of the body—originated. After Daniel the transition was soon made to a universal resurrection, a last judgment, the reward of the righteous in Paradise, and the punishment of the wicked in Hell. In this form we find the belief in the New Testament period. It has been necessary to trace the history of the doctrine at some length, because one of the principal problems with which the student of the New Testament is called upon to deal, is that of the relationship of Jesus and his Apostles to this Messianic idea. One of the principal duties of the early apostolic missionaries was to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah (Acts 2³⁶, 17³). The student should remember that the words Messiah, Christ, and ‘anointed’ only express the same meaning in three different languages; the early Christian teachers, whose language was Greek, knew of only one word. Then he will realise that others had been regarded as Christ—even in the Old Testament; for example, Cyrus in (pseudo-) Is. 45¹, and an unknown prince in a late Psalm (Ps. 2²). We cannot here discuss all that has been said about Jesus and the Messiahship by

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modern scholars. There are four main possibilities: (1) that Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah from the outset; (2) that he only gradually realised that he was to be the Messiah; (3) that the Apostles after the death of their Master were the first to discover the Messiahship; (4) that the Messiahship was a doctrine of later dogmatic Christianity, and that the Gospels—in their present form—were written to give it the authority of Jesus himself. Many scholars would be glad to eliminate the Messiahship altogether from the life of Jesus, because it implies that the Founder of their Religion had the limitations not only of the Jewish nation, but those of the Jewish nation at one particular period of its development. But even if we accept the Messiahship, we are still faced by new problems, *e.g.* the following: (1) Was the suffering and crucifixion a necessary part of the work of the Messiah? This is the view of Acts 3¹⁸, 4²⁷⁻²⁸, 8^{32f} foll; Lk. 24⁴⁶. Various parts of (pseudo-) Isaiah, *e.g.* chap. 53, would naturally support this view; these passages are, however, supposed by Giesebrecht to refer to the personified people of Israel. It is also possible to suppose that the reference is to some contemporary hero, *e.g.* Sheshbazzar or Zerubbabel. There would still be other passages, *e.g.* Zech. 12¹⁰

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and the 2nd Psalm. But supposing that the Death and Passion were a necessary part of the Messiah's work, there still remain two questions: Was his work completed by his glorious Resurrection, which opened to the elect the doors of eternal salvation, or was he to come a second time, when—as in Daniel—the bodies of the dead were to be raised and the earthly kingdom was to begin? The latter is the alternative accepted by modern Christendom, which has stubbornly retained the early doctrines of Christianity on this point. The Anglican Church, for example, still repeats the old formula: 'He ascended into heaven. From thence He shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead; I believe in the Resurrection of the Body.' Nevertheless it is doubtful whether the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body, at all events, has much hold upon the modern mind. The early teachers of the Church felt the same difficulties (2 Thes. 2²; 2 Pet. 3⁴). What we have said will make it clear that the Jewish groundwork must not be forgotten in dealing with the problems of early Christianity; and the student will see what justification there is for the statement that Catholic Christianity was primitive Christianity Judaised. The attitude of the Church to Origen in the fifth

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and sixth centuries was the same as that of pious Judaism to Greek speculation in the ante-Christian period.

What is the attitude of modern scholars to the life of Jesus? We may divide them into two groups. In some points both schools agree; it would be difficult, for example, to find any critic who would defend the historical character of the Fourth Gospel; the same may be said of many of the narratives in the other (Synoptic) Gospels, *e.g.* the Virgin Birth. So far there is unanimity; but from this point the two groups diverge. More conservative critics are anxious to save the historical element underlying the Gospels. Some of them solve the Messianic difficulty by a skilful reconstruction of the text; others go so far as to explain the appearances after the Resurrection as visions. By these devices all stumbling-blocks are removed, and we are able to construct a picture of the historical Jesus, the preacher of love, righteousness, and peace, and the founder of a new and spiritual kingdom, sealing his testimony with his blood. To this school belong—to mention only the most modern writers—Wernle, Soltau, v. Dobschütz, and Bousset. The details in their various lives or accounts of Jesus differ, but the general outline is the same. Thus a

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foundation is discovered upon which Paul and his successors are supposed to have built.

Schweitzer has subjected the work of scholars in this field to a searching criticism. He acutely observes that though E. v. Hartmann rejects the Jesus of the Gospels, nevertheless his point of view is the same as that of Wernle and the rest. For they are all alike in realising that the Jesus of the Gospels is not a Germanic ideal; but, whereas in the case of v. Hartmann this is a reason for refusing to acknowledge him, the others try to eliminate the unsympathetic elements and give to the modern world a Jesus upon which the German nation may build a new faith as upon a rock. According to most critics of this school, the Christology of Paul is based upon the teaching of the historical Jesus. Wellhausen and Harnack, for example, say that Paul alone understood Jesus. According to Wrede, on the other hand, 'The moral sublimity of Jesus, his purity and piety, his activity as missionary and prophet among his people, in a word, the whole ethical and religious aspect of his earthly life mean to Paul—nothing.' In another place he says, 'Paul already believed in a supernatural and divine Christ, before he believed in Jesus.'

This may be a suitable place to pause in order

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to give a word of warning to the student of New Testament history who has only the English version before him. This version professes to be a translation from the original Greek. The question then arises—From which of the many manuscripts? For there are altogether 2339 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament at present in existence, and so far are these from containing the same text that there are probably 200,000 different readings. Which of these then is the inspired text? Nor are the variations always unimportant; on the contrary, even in essential points of New Testament doctrine and history, the testimony of our manuscripts is sometimes conflicting; examples are: The song of the heavenly host in Lk. 2¹⁴; the agony in the garden, Lk. 22^{43, 44} (these two verses were no doubt struck out by the orthodox in the fourth century because they testified too clearly to the humanity of Christ); the meal in Lk. 24⁴²; the Lord's Prayer; the chapter on the Resurrection, 1 Cor. 15⁵¹; the Baptism of Jesus, Mt. 3^{16, 17}; the account of the Last Supper, Lk. 22¹⁷; the witness to the Trinity, 1 Jo. 5⁷. The last especially deserves to be noticed; it is the clearest—perhaps the only—statement of the doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament. It is im-

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portant, therefore, to be sure that it is an integral part of the text. As a matter of fact, we find that it occurs in none of the Greek manuscripts; it first crops up about the year 400 in Latin manuscripts in Spain. It was allowed to remain by the Latin Church because the doctrine it contained was sound. The reason for its retention is instructive; we see that the Church was not guided by principles of criticism but by the claims of orthodoxy. The question arises: in how many cases have passages been struck out from the original for the same reason?

We go back to our subject. We have seen that one of the two schools of German critics has arrived at a 'scientific' account of the life of Jesus, capable, as they imagine, of withstanding all assaults of criticism. This historical Jesus and the Pauline Christology—for which we have Paul's own treatises—furnish a solid rock on which the edifice of Christianity stands securely based. The author would, however, not be justified in ignoring the fact that there is another group of critics who reject the Gospels as altogether unhistorical. The first scientific historian who took up this position was Bruno Bauer, who had the misfortune to live before his time. Among other more or less pronounced

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opponents of the 'historical' school are Frazer (*The Golden Bough*), Robertson (*Pagan Christs*), Mead (*Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?*), Kalthoff, Jensen (who regards the New Testament narrative as a variation of the Babylonian myth of Gilgames and Tiamat), Bolland, and W. B. Smith (*Der vorchristliche Jesus*). Gunkel, who speaks with great moderation, says that the Christology of Paul and John cannot have been derived from the Jesus of the Gospels, nor can it have been the product of their own reflection; on the contrary it existed before their time, and in all its essential elements parallels can be found in other religions. Some writers go so far as to suppose that there never was any historical Jesus at all; others think that though the Jesus of whom the Synoptic Gospels speak once lived, nevertheless the life of Jesus, as there described, has only a remote resemblance to that of the real Jesus. As there has arisen recently a strong tendency among critics to favour these views, they must detain us for a short time. The arguments against the historical school are these: (1) The Gospels contain various stories of a mystical or mythical character, which postulate something more than the simple preaching of the new kingdom of righteousness; such are the

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accounts of the Transfiguration and Temptation; even in narratives of events not supernatural, mystical elements are found, *e.g.* the blood and water at the Crucifixion, the prophecy of a baptism of fire at the Baptism, and so forth; (2) Paul knows hardly anything of the life of Jesus; he never appeals to the elevated morality in the teaching of Jesus, which the historical school regard as the kernel of Christianity; moreover, in the two or three places where he does allude to an historical Jesus, he apparently followed an account different from those of the Synoptics. Nevertheless even these few allusions might establish the fact that there was at all events some groundwork for the Gospel narrative, were it not that there are serious grounds for doubting the genuineness of any of the Pauline epistles. It is well known that since the days of F. C. Baur critics have been disposed to reject all but Rom., 1 and 2 Cor., and Gal. as spurious, but Steck has pointed out with great force that the only reason for retaining these four was that they were necessary for Baur's theory of an anti-Jewish Christianity: with the abandonment of that theory there is no reason why even the four should be retained. Van Manen maintains the spuriousness of all the Pauline epistles; Brückner

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admits that these views have not received the attention they deserve in Germany. If Van Manen's theories are correct, the Gospels will lose one of their few remaining supports.

The subject, however, is one into which it is impossible to enter in an elementary book like this. The student who wishes for a temperate treatment of the life of Christ from the sceptical standpoint may read Kalthoff's *Entstehung des Christentums*. Kalthoff has done a service by calling attention to the fact that some parts of the New Testament appear to have originated on Italian (or Sicilian) ground. It may well be the case, for example, that the story in Lk. 7³⁷ foll. was suggested by the conversion of Marcia, the concubine of the Emperor Commodus (180-192), or that the parable in Lk. 16¹ foll. may have been intended to justify the financial irregularities of Pope Callistus (about 220). At the same time the present writer cannot support Kalthoff's view that the most primitive Christianity was a form of revolutionary socialism: it is, of course, impossible to discuss this question here. There is more to be said for the theory that the Gospel narratives originated in a sect like that of the Essenes. Even the name Essene has been derived from Jesus. According to this theory the Gospels

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in their original form were allegorical; in other words, Christ is a collective name for the primitive Christians (cp. Mt. 25⁴⁰), just as the name Israel in the Old Testament is often a collective name for the Israelites (*e.g.* Hosea 11¹). The Gospels were not intended to be regarded as a narrative of events that actually happened any more than *e.g.* Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* or Dante's Poem. It would be possible to support this view from Mt. 13¹³ foll. Of course in any case we have to admit the existence of later accretions. If we suppose that the raising of Lazarus (Jo. 11¹⁷) is suggested by the parable of Lazarus (Lk. 16¹⁹)—and this is the belief of some scholars—then we see the dramatic freedom of treatment which the author allowed himself.

This is perhaps the place to say a word about the 'aretalogiae' of the period. The Hellenistic age possessed an abundant romance literature. When a work of this class was written for religious edification, it appears to have been called an aretalogia—though the meaning of the word is disputed. Such a work would be, for example, the exploits of a hero or God, or the missionary wanderings of a teacher. This form of literature is best known to us from the parodies of Lucian (*e.g.* in the *Vera Historia*) and the 15th Satire

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of Juvenal. The narrative of Er the Armenian in Plato's Republic is an example, as also the late Book of Jonah in the Old Testament—a book which helps to throw light on Lucian's parody. The influence of the Book of Jonah is remarkably illustrated in early Christian art, where this theme constantly recurs; the central point of Christianity in modern times—the crucified Christ—is almost as conspicuously absent. A striking feature of this class of literature is that the writer always insists on the truth of the story he is going to tell. 'What I am going to tell you is not like Ulysses' [incredible] story to Alcinous,' says Plato. 'These things actually happened quite recently in Egypt in the consulship of Juncus; I have been in Egypt myself,' says Juvenal. The title of Lucian's book ('A true Narrative') speaks for itself. Now if this is to be regarded as merely the repetition of a stereotyped formula, it follows that we have here no evidence that Juvenal was ever in Egypt. But this suggests that in our canonical Acts of the Apostles, which can hardly be uninfluenced by this class of literature, the use of the 'we' (in Acts 21¹ and elsewhere) is only a similar dramatic addition. The word is used in the same way in the Acts of John. Hitherto all critics have supposed that the 'we' was a

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sure evidence that either the author of the Acts or the source from which he copied was an eyewitness of the events narrated. If the above view is correct this belief loses its support. Reitzenstein has written at great length on this subject, and he comes to the conclusion that both the Shepherd of Hermas and the Acts of John are Christian 'aretalogiae'; whole pieces of these Christian works are taken from Greek-Egyptian sources. Many features recur in Philostratus for example. The story of magical deliverance from prison occurs three times in the Acts and corresponds to heathen models. How familiar it must have been in this period is apparent from what the hero of Philostratus says when thrown into prison for sorcery: 'If I am not a magician then you ought not to imprison me; if I am, then it is useless to imprison me': he means that any magician could make his escape from a closed prison as a matter of course. The fact that the same story recurs three times in the Acts (in cc. 5, 12, 16) is already suspicious. The punishment inflicted on the innocent soldiers (12¹⁹) is natural enough from a dramatic standpoint, but it is difficult to see how it is consistent with divine justice if we suppose a real supernatural interposition; finally, the colouring of the story

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in Acts 16 (*e.g.* verses ²³, ²⁴, ²⁶, etc.) suggests that the writer is trying to surpass his rivals in his account of the exploit of his hero. Reitzenstein suggests that the song of Paul and Silas in Acts 16 ²⁵ may have replaced what was in the original a magic spell. The reader must not be surprised if he is asked to approach such narratives as these in a critical spirit; for even what is called 'history' in classical antiquity is plentifully seasoned with pure inventions from the story of Kynaigeiros down to Tacitus. It is difficult to refrain from smiling when one reads, for example, the last two sentences of Tac. *Ann.* vi. 7.

III

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Paul.—But it is time now to pass on to Paul. Even supposing that the reader does not admit the genuineness of the Pauline epistles, the name of Paul (rather than that of *e.g.* Pauline school) may nevertheless be retained in discussing Pauline Christianity as represented by the epistles. The name of Paul suggests a new series of problems. Was he—as some have said—the real founder of Christianity? What was his relation to Greek philosophy and to Judaism? What was his relation to Jesus and the Gospels? There has been a strong tendency with a certain school to base their Christianity on Paul; and many try to give him a place by the side of Plato; the Platonic scholar, J. Adam, for example, has recently declared himself in favour of this. In the opinion of the present writer no view could be more mistaken. Plato was before all things a political thinker. His two longest and most

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important works are on the constitution and laws of the ideal state. When this ideal state comes into existence the citizen is to cultivate his faculties by music and gymnastic; can anything be more foreign to Pauline ideas than this? See, for example, Phil. 1 ^{21, 24}, where his only reason for desiring to continue in the flesh is that he may benefit his converts; or 1 Cor. 5 ⁵, where the body may be delivered over to Satan in order that the spirit may be saved (cp. also Rom. 13 ¹⁴). We cannot suppose that such a man would have felt any interest in any ideal state on earth—least of all one based upon the aristocratic principle of the essential inequality of men (Phil. 2 ⁷; 1 Cor. 7 ^{21, 22}). Again Plato was a master of pure and musical prose: he devotes more than one of his dialogues to the subject of style: compare with this 1 Cor. 2 ^{4, 5}. A better parallel to Paul would be St. Theresa, who has the same tendency to mysticism, and the missionary's talent for organisation; both again, though ardent children of their creeds—for Paul was a Jew to the end ¹—were banned by many of their less intelligent co-religionists; even the style of writing of the

¹ 'Paul with his austerity made Jewish holiness his watch-word'—Kohler in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. On this point the judgment of a Jewish scholar may be trusted.

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two is similar. Finally we come to Plato's metaphysics: here at all events we have a similarity it will be said. The main feature of Platonic doctrine is that the visible, sensible world is only a counterpart of an invisible super-sensible world; this super-sensible world is the real world, and the apparent and visible world is related to it as an image in a glass to the object reflected. But this conception is common to many forms of oriental thought; it is to many oriental thinkers a self-evident axiom and not a revelation of Plato, as some modern Platonists would have us believe; we find it in Paul, *e.g.* Rom. 1 ²⁰, but it is not here the basis of a system; it is merely an obvious truth, which we expect to find as a matter of course in any religious teacher. As a matter of fact later writers have maintained with some plausibility that Plato borrowed his conception of the ideal world either from the Orphics or from oriental or Egyptian sources.

In trying to understand Paul we must once more be careful not to read into his Epistles all the modern theology that professes to be based upon them. A modern Protestant if asked for the leading features of Pauline theology would probably name the following: (1) Justification by Faith; (2) The Atonement; (3) Antagonism

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to Judaism; (4) A lofty ethical standard. Of these the first is part of his anti-Jewish polemic; the statement that he was antagonistic to Judaism is true only within certain limits. As for Paul's ethical teaching and the doctrine of the Atonement we will speak of them later: here it will be enough to say that the Atonement is not by any means the centre of Pauline Christianity. What then is that centre? It is this—that man is born again into a new life by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The modern man is apt to lose sight of this, because he regards as figurative what is meant quite literally. This is a danger which is always confronting the student of the Old Testament and New Testament. The Christian is supposed by Paul to have experienced literally the death and resurrection—the two involve one another—of Christ, and to have become a new man, and received spiritual gifts. The tendency of modern Protestantism is to suppose that this new birth comes to us only after death. For example, a characteristically favourite verse such as Jo. 3¹⁶ would by most modern men be taken to mean that if we confess our belief in Christ we shall after death enter into everlasting life. It is difficult to suppose that Paul would have been successful in converting unbelievers if

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he had approached them with this doctrine. With Paul the new life begins during this life; this is clear enough from the fact that spiritual gifts ('charismata') are an earnest of the presence of the Spirit. Let the student, for example, read 1 Cor. 12⁷⁻¹¹; the Spirit works a change during this life; other characteristic passages are Rom. 1¹¹; Gal. 3⁵; and 1 Cor. 14. The same is the doctrine of the Gospels, *e.g.*, Mk. 16¹⁷—how do modern Protestants interpret this?—and Lk. 10¹⁷⁻²⁰. But there is no need to appeal to the spiritual gifts; his language is unmistakable without that evidence; once for all we must not be satisfied with the explanation that his words are to be taken 'figuratively.' He speaks of a real change of personality. Most significant of all perhaps is Gal. 2²⁰, 'That which lives is not I, but Christ dwelleth in me!' [The opposite state in Rom. 7¹⁷.] Other passages are 2 Cor. 5¹⁷; Gal. 3²⁷; Rom. 7⁵ ('When we *were* in the flesh'); Rom. 8⁹; Col. 3^{9, 10}; the 'new man' that is thus formed is the 'inward man' of 2 Cor. 4¹⁶. It is perhaps worth while observing that this possession of the Holy Spirit corresponds to the obsession of men,—*e.g.*, in the Gospels—by an evil spirit. When Jesus, for example, casts out an evil spirit, it is this spirit which he addresses,

and not the individual who is a temporary abode for the spirit (Mk. 5⁸, 9²⁵; cp. Acts 16¹⁸). So complete is this obsession that if the devil is dumb, the individual cannot speak till the devil is cast out (Lk. 11¹⁴). Precisely corresponding to this is the idea that one who is possessed by the Holy Spirit does not speak his own words, but the words of the Spirit, so that the speaker is identified—for the time being—with the Spirit (Apoc. 2⁷; Mt. 10²⁰). In fact, as Wernle points out, the whole theory of inspiration—the belief in which till quite recently was universal among Christians—is based on this conception. Here then—in this doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which the personality is transformed—we have the cardinal point of Pauline teaching. It should be noted that the writings of Paul are letters addressed in most cases to those who had already profited by his preaching; we cannot, therefore, expect to find a theological system, still less detailed psychological analysis, such as we find, for example, in the Greek philosophers. We have to form an idea of what his psychology was from isolated statements. The most important is in 1 Cor. 15⁴⁴: ‘There is a “psychic” body and a “pneumatic” body’; even this gives us something different from the

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modern conception of body and soul as the two constituent elements of the human individual. According to modern orthodox belief after the decay of the body the soul still survives. But in the Pauline system the soul is itself complex, consisting of at least two elements and 'it is the 'pneumatic'—not the 'psychic'—which is the life-giving element. Further this life-giving process begins already in this life. It is hardly likely that Paul would have found satisfaction in the continued existence of a 'psyche' unregenerated by the 'pneuma.' It would be helpful if we could suppose that Paul—like the Gnostics, with whom he has much in common—believed in three principles, combined in man. True he never definitely states such a doctrine (Phil. 2¹⁰ seems to point that way), but neither does he speak of God as three-fold; nevertheless he can hardly have failed to teach this doctrine which is almost universal in religious teaching; man—being made in the image of God—ought therefore to possess three principles. The fleshly body is excluded; this would be to Paul only a manifestation and not a principle in itself. Perhaps the third principle is the 'body of sin' in Rom. 6⁶. This, however, is conjecture: the psyche and the pneuma are definite, and the

word 'body' used of each shows that both are supposed to have—in however subtle a form—a quasi-material nature. There is an interesting passage in the Old Testament which shows that the psyche was sometimes regarded as something that could be detached from the body and even captured and snared by witchcraft, when thus separated; this is Ezekiel 13¹⁸ foll., which has only recently been thus explained by Frazer, who compares similar practices in Africa and elsewhere. Instructive also is Lk. 12²², 'Take no thought for your *soul* what ye shall eat.'

Apart from the absence of a systematic account, Paul's references to the pneuma are not free from difficulties and inconsistencies; these may be due to a gradual development of his own mind or to interpolations and alterations by early editors. The student must always be prepared to allow for this possibility even if the genuineness of most of the epistles be admitted. As we have already seen, some scholars give very forcible reasons for supposing that all the Pauline epistles are spurious (for the possibility compare 2 Thess. 2²). Among these difficult questions are the following: (1) What is the exact relation of Christ to the Church, *i.e.* the body of the elect? and (2) How far are Christ

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and the Spirit the same? In many places (Col. 1²⁴; 1 Cor. 12²⁷; Eph. 1²³; 5³⁰) the Church is the body of Christ, or (Col. 1¹⁸; 2¹⁹) the body of which Christ is the head, so that Church and Christ are in a sense identified. In other places (Eph. 5³²) Christ and the Church are as the bridegroom to the bride. The later Church had no difficulty in regarding the Church itself as a personality, existing before Jesus came down to earth. The Armenian church has gone furthest in this direction; the Church here almost takes the place of Mary, and receives the epithet 'Theotokos,' *i.e.* 'Mother of God.' This also is an idea strange to the modern mind—that a number of persons should unite to form one personality. Nevertheless it is stated clearly enough in Rom. 12⁵. Moreover it is part of the symbolism of the Lord's Supper that the separate grains of corn unite to form one lump of bread. So too we have the personification of Macedonia in Acts 16⁹. Compare Dan. 10^{13, 20}; Sirach 17¹⁷; and the angels of the churches in the Apocalypse.

Another difficulty is the precise relation of Christ to the Spirit. In 2 Cor. 3¹⁷ Christ is identified with the Spirit, and in the following verse the two are combined in one title 'the Lord Spirit.'

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After what has been said, it will readily be understood that a doctrine like that of the Atonement will hardly appear in Paul in the same form in which it is familiar to us in the theology of the present day. Christ, the Redeemer, may be regarded as delivering us from either (1) The consequences of Sin; (2) Sin; (3) the Power of Evil Spirits; or (4) the Prison House of Matter. The first is probably the view of the modern orthodox believer; the third perhaps that of Paul; the fourth that of the Gnostics. In any case the doctrine of the Atonement is not the most prominent part of Paul's teaching. No doubt it was suggested in his case by the Old Testament (1 Cor. 15³), in other words it was a point of view intended to appeal to Jews. In other places he makes use of illustrations familiar to his readers. For example in Col. 2¹⁴ he speaks of nailing the 'cheirographon' to the cross: the 'cheirographon' was a bill containing the items of a debt; in the commercial world such a bill when paid was cancelled by affixing a cross to it; Paul, therefore, by a play upon words speaks of 'attaching the bill to the cross' instead of 'attaching a cross to the bill.' In a similar spirit we ought perhaps to interpret 1 Cor. 5⁷, 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.' That is to say

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it is not intended to be the foundation of a dogma; it is only a figure drawn from a source familiar to his hearers, an additional thread in the fabric he is weaving. The idea that sin had reigned supreme as a consequence of the disobedience of Adam, suggests that the obedience of Christ brings about a reconciliation with an offended God; such is the underlying thought in Rom. 5¹⁰; so in 1 Cor. 6²⁰ by a natural figure the blood of Christ is the price by which freedom from bondage to sin is purchased. The following seems to be the argument in Gal. 3¹³ (cp. 2 Cor. 5²¹); every one hanging on a tree is accursed; therefore Christ became a curse; but Christ died; therefore the curse, *i.e.* the curse of the law, is dead. This seems to the modern mind rather too subtle a refinement. As we might expect, the scape-goat of Lev. 16 is also introduced in this connection by later writers, *e.g.* Barnabas (Ep. 7⁶). We must remember then (1) that the idea of the Atonement is—like that of sacrifice or the Sacraments—complex; and (2) that for illustrations of its meaning we are referred back—this is especially the case in the Epistle to the Hebrews—to the Old Testament. A further subtlety was introduced by some of the Gnostic sects, who taught that the God who gave the

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Jewish law was convicted of a violation of his own law by shedding the innocent blood of Jesus; thus the law and the author of it were both superseded: perhaps an echo of this survives in Jo. 16¹¹.

A few words should be said about Paul's ethical teaching and his relation to the state and culture. The last two need not delay us. We find no trace of any love of art, no indication—herein he stands in marked contrast to the Gospels—that he was touched by the beauty of natural objects, such as the 'lilies of the field,' and no cultivation of literary style; this last indeed he expressly disclaims in 1 Cor. 2⁴. Nor was he a political reformer. In our own day political problems occupy men's minds more than any others; and it is not unusual to hear reformers appealing for support to the New Testament. Nevertheless it is very doubtful whether the spirit of the New Testament can be described as favourable to any particular political creed: it may be called non-political.

The belief in a future world is more dim and vague in the modern mind; consequently it is only natural that the more obvious pleasures of this life are more eagerly sought after and social injustices are more keenly felt. In the Gospels,

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on the other hand, the future world is the only reality (*e.g.*, Mt. 10²⁸), and the natural conclusion is drawn that the things of this world are not worth caring about. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates this. In Paul the indifference to the things of this world is equally marked. It will be sufficient to point out that slaves are not even encouraged to seek their liberty but to remain in their present condition (1 Cor. 7²¹). Paul speaks of himself as the slave of Christ. The use of the word 'servant' in the English rather breaks the force of the original. The absence of both æsthetic susceptibilities and political tendency stamps Paul as a man of a different race from the Greek philosophers. But further he is not primarily an ethical teacher; it is here that he differs from *e.g.* Aristotle, to whom the cultivation of an ethical ideal is an end in itself. It is noteworthy that he nowhere quotes the ethical teaching of Jesus, which modern scholars often tell us is the base upon which the whole structure of Christianity is reared. Jesus in fact—apart from his death and resurrection—hardly appears at all in the Pauline epistles (2 Cor. 5¹⁶). Those who possess the Spirit have been foreordained thereto (Rom. 8³⁰), and personal righteousness does not make any one a partaker in the Spirit. The

‘psychic,’ *i.e.* non-spiritual man, regards the things of the spirit as foolishness (1 Cor. 2¹⁴). Although Paul’s own life from the psychic standpoint had been blameless (Phil. 3⁶), he is far from making this a claim for consideration, and it appears from the passage that he would not consider himself on account of his righteousness as more worthy than a sinful person. This seems a hard saying, and it is an obvious objection that the new religion might seem to encourage unrighteousness; Paul anticipates this objection (Gal. 2¹⁷; Rom. 3⁸), but his reply is addressed to those who are already spiritual. The mere fact that Paul’s whole mission was to the Gentiles and not to the Jews alone, is sufficient evidence of the equality of the righteous and the unrighteous (cp. Col. 2¹³), as partakers in the new religion, for to Paul the Jews represent the element of righteousness as against the Gentiles. At most a certain precedence is conceded to the Jews. Quite similar is the attitude of Jesus—the friend of publicans and sinners—in the Gospels; it is enough to refer to the parables in Lk. 14¹⁶⁻²⁴; 15³⁻⁷; 15¹¹⁻³²; cp. also Mt. 11¹¹. Good works become to Paul the natural fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5²²); the flesh being crucified (Gal. 5²⁴) can no longer be a cause of evil. Nevertheless here too we do not find

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absolute consistency; for example in Rom. 6^{6,7} compared with 6¹². Most singular of all is the fact that the converts themselves by no means appear as models of good conduct (Gal. 5¹⁵; Gal. 6¹; 2 Thess 3¹¹; 1 Cor. 5¹¹; 1 Cor. 6⁸; 1 Cor. 6⁶). In 1 Cor. 5¹ we read that a brother had been guilty of sin, which was 'not so much as named among the Gentiles,' and yet the brethren appear to have gloried in the offence (v. 6); in 1 Cor. 11²¹ even the sacredness of the Lord's Supper was profaned by disreputable scenes. It is worth-while to draw attention to such passages because they show—like Paul's admission, that if a stranger were to happen to come amongst the brethren during their meetings he would probably consider that they were mad (1 Cor. 14²³)—how far the earliest church was from fulfilling the ideals which various sects have sought to 'restore.' We may here make brief mention of Paul's indulgence towards a singular custom of early Christianity; this was a union, formed by two unmarried persons, a 'brother' and a 'sister,' who—interpreting literally Gal. 3²⁸—lived together without any violation of personal chastity, whilst they nevertheless appeared to the outside world to be guilty of illicit concubinage. The discredit incurred by the misunderstanding of the world only increased

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the glory of the act, an exaggeration of the spirit of the command in Mt. 6^{17, 18}. Not only do we find allusions to this practice in the Shepherd of Hermas, the Teaching of the Apostles and Tertullian—perhaps also in Ignatius—but Grafe has pointed out that it is already to be found in 1 Cor. 7³⁶⁻³⁸. The Church made desperate efforts to stamp the custom out, but it continued to exist in the Nestorian church as late as the seventh century.

Of philosophy—in the modern acceptation of the term—we find little or nothing in Paul. He himself disclaims the title of philosopher in 2 Cor. 1¹² and 1 Cor. 1²⁷ (Col. 2⁸ is perhaps rather an allusion to the gnosis). It is from another standpoint that we must approach the study of Paul—a standpoint which we may give in the words of Wrede: ‘Paul believes that without Christ mankind is in the power of potent spirits—demons and angelic powers. In our own day angels are regarded as the property of children and poets; for the apostle and his time they are sober realities.’ The modern man when he studies the New Testament brings with him from his academic training two misconceptions: (1) he imagines that the ‘classical’ authors were representatives of Greek sentiment, whereas they were

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only the enlightened few; (2) he believes that Greek history ended with the reign of Alexander; it would be more correct to say that it only began then. Nor is he much better off when he studies the New Testament from a Jewish standpoint. Here again his horizon is bounded by the Old Testament; of the period 'between the books' he is generally ignorant. Nevertheless it is precisely here principally that we must look for the ideas with which the youthful mind of Paul had been imbued. What the world of a thoughtful Jew of those days was, may be seen from such books as the Wisdom of Solomon and the Fourth Book of Ezra. One fact alone will suffice to show how complete was the change which the Jewish people had undergone since the beginning of the captivity. They had actually changed their language. Long before the days of Jesus they had exchanged Hebrew for Aramaic. When the New Testament speaks of Hebrew (*e.g.* Jo. 19²⁰), it may be assumed in most cases that Aramaic is meant. Even the Old Testament is quoted in Aramaic (Mk. 15³⁴). This then was the language of Jesus. It is interesting to note that Aramaic does not distinguish between 'Man' and 'Son of Man.' No title has been more discussed than this title of 'Son of Man.' The language testimony therefore is important.

IV

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE APOLOGISTS

Catholic Church.—We now go forward fifty years to the beginning of the second century. The dominant feature of the period is the growth of the idea of a Catholic Church, with suitable organisation, an *imperium in imperio*, a conscious rival of the Roman empire. To the literature of this period or to the last years of the preceding century belong the following: the Gospel of John, the Epistle of Clement of Rome, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Pastoral Letters (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), the Gospel of Peter, the Epistles of Peter and John, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Teaching of the Apostles, the Epistles of Ignatius, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle of Barnabas, and—a little later—the Greek Apologists. Most characteristic, perhaps, are the Epistles of Ignatius. We find the organisation of the Church changing. In Pauline times we read of apostles, prophets, teachers (1 Cor. 12²⁸; Eph. 3⁵); the

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name apostle is not confined to the twelve (Phil. 2²⁵; 2 Cor. 8²³; Rom. 16⁷, where, by the bye, the name Junia is masculine). In the new church of the period we hear no more of apostles and prophets, but of bishops, elders, deacons. True, these are also found in the earlier documents, but no distinction appears to have been drawn between the bishops and elders; moreover there is no evidence of a single bishop at the head of a church (Phil. 1¹); in fact a rigid separation of clergy from laity can hardly have existed. The brethren met in the house of one of their number (Rom. 16⁵; 1 Cor. 16¹⁹). It is one of the most striking changes in history to pass from the picture of Paul disputing daily for two years in the school of one Tyrannus (Acts 19⁹), to the fully organised Church possessing already, down even to the names of its officials, the outlines of the features which have become so familiar since. Herein lies the pathos of the 3rd Epistle of John. The Church has no longer any room for the old missionary teachers who wrought with their own hands so that they might be chargeable to no man (vv. 9, 10).

What the Church gains in outward form it loses in inspiration. It is noteworthy that on the only occasion when Ignatius professes to speak

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‘by inspiration,’ it is to admonish the Church to be obedient to the bishop. It may readily be supposed that this change was greatly helped by the gradual decay of the belief in the immediate return of the glorified Christ. Henceforward it became more and more manifest that the task of the Church lay upon earth, and there is evidently a deliberate intention to press everything into the service of the new religion. The Old Testament had become nothing more than the forerunner of the new dispensation, and now the various cults—of Mithras, Æsculapius,¹ the Mysteries, the Egyptian Hermes, etc.—were all laid under contribution. It is worth while tracing the process in one case—that of the Roman Emperor-worship—where it began perhaps earliest of all. Already in the year 9 B.C., the birthday of the Emperor Augustus is thus alluded to in an inscription recently discovered: ‘The birthday of the God was the beginning to the world of the message of glad tidings’ (evangelium), ‘which came by him.’ The resemblance to Lk. 2^{10, 11} cannot be overlooked, especially the use of a word so

¹ The great God of Tit. 2¹³ may be the Mystery God. The Greek worshipper who besought Æsculapius to cure an ailment believed that the God actually appeared to him. This reminds us of 2 Cor. 12⁸. We may also compare Jo. 9¹¹.

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characteristic of Christianity as 'evangelium.' Both Harnack and Wendland have drawn attention to the importance of the whole inscription to the student of early Christianity. The name 'Divi filius' (Son of God) applied to Augustus no doubt meant more than 'son of Divus Julius.' The tendency to speak of Christ as the 'Son of God' increases with the growth of Christianity. In the Fourth Gospel men are called 'children of God' in order that the name 'Son of God' might be reserved for Christ. The name was one which both Jew and Gentile might combine to use, but in the case of Christ it has its origin in Greek ideas. The Greeks found no difficulty in regarding Perseus, for example, as the son of Zeus, and even in historical times the wife of the king Archon of Athens was formally betrothed to the God Dionysus. It is in such ideas as this that the Gospel story of the virgin birth has its origin. Matthew, of course, boldly quotes Isaiah 7¹⁴, but there is nothing in the original Hebrew about a virgin. Luke has been brought 'up to date' by an interpolator who inserted verses 34 and 35 in chap. i. Reitzenstein is no doubt right in supposing that the whole question of the relation of the human and divine elements in Christ, a question which convulsed the

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world in the fourth and fifth centuries, already existed in the germ in the pre-Christian period. Other parallels between the two cults may be briefly enumerated. Domitian is called 'Our Lord and God'; compare Jo. 20²⁸. The name 'Saviour' or 'Saviour of the world' (1 Jo. 4¹⁴) is used of Julius Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian; it is borrowed from the East, where the titles 'King of Kings' and 'Lord of Lords' (Apoc. 17¹⁴, 19¹⁶) are used of contemporary sovereigns. In 2 Cor. 5²⁰ and Eph. 6²⁰ Paul applies to himself the name 'presbeutes' ('presbeuo'); this does not mean 'ambassador,' as in the Eng. Vers., but is the Greek equivalent of the Latin 'legatus Caesaris.' The 'legatus' might be the governor of a province (*e.g.* Quirinius Lk. 2²), or some one entrusted with a special mission by the Emperor. Paul then stands in a similar relation to Christ. So, too, the Greek word translated 'committed' in Gal. 2⁷ (recurring 1 Cor. 9¹⁷; 1 Tim. 1¹¹; Tit. 1³, etc.) is a technical word for the head of one of the departments in the 'Civil Service.' The same idea is present in 2 Cor. 3³; Paul is here the secretary of the 'King' Christ. The formal letters addressed by emperors to individual provincial communities have their counterpart in the seven letters addressed in the Apoc.

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to the seven churches. The word used in 2 Tim. 3¹⁵ for the Holy Scriptures is also used technically of imperial edicts. The equivalent of the imperial title of 'pontifex maximus' was 'archiereus' ('high priest'), which is first brought into prominence as a title of Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the year 68 A.D. the 28th of September was a day set apart as the 'day of Julius Augustus'; this has its analogy in the 'Lord's day' (once only in the New Testament in Apoc. 1¹⁰). The celebration of December 25th as the Birthday of Christ is later: it dates officially from 354 A.D., when it was no doubt taken over from the Mithras religion. Long before the Christian era the word 'parousia' ('advent') was used for the visit of a king to one of his provincial towns. The word 'epiphany'—also an earlier word—is used instead of 'parousia' in the above sense; the Pastoral Epistles speak of the second coming of Christ as his 'epiphany.' The 'epiphany' of C. Caesar in Cos and the first 'parousia' of Hadrian in Greece (124 A.D.) were each the beginning of a new era. The word is used in 2 Tim. 1¹⁰ of the First Coming of Christ, and from this our Christian era is dated. We have already observed that Paul speaks of himself as a slave of Christ; but further, the word 'Christianus' itself, which was

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not always the designation of Christ's followers, means nothing more than 'slave of Christ,' and is formed on the analogy of 'Caesarianus,' 'slave of Caesar'; such slaves were to be found everywhere in the Roman Empire. The common title 'freedman of Caesar' becomes in 1 Cor. 7²² 'freedman of Christ.' Finally, the student of the history of the Empire who is familiar with the title 'amici Caesaris,' will now find a new meaning in Jo. 15¹⁵, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends.'¹ The day which the Romans had consecrated to Romulus and Remus as the founders of the city appears in the new calendar as the Festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, the founders of the new religion. The visit of the Wise Men from the East, related by Matthew, is perhaps a copy of the visit of Tiridates to Rome in the reign of Nero (66). All this proves clearly a deliberate imitation of the political forms of the Empire, and accounts incidentally for the persecution of the early Christians by the State.

In place of the early communities which possessed and imparted spiritual gifts, we have an organised church system, a developed liturgy, the first beginnings of a dogmatic theology, the attack

¹ The above examples are from Deissmann, who also gives others.

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upon heresy. The theologian and the priest gradually take the place of the apostle and teacher. The Canon of the New Testament is slowly formed to take the place of the direct inspiration of the first teachers. The prophets are still found—among the Montanists, for example—but the Church looks upon them coldly. Till Pope Soter (167-174) the Church at Rome was under the direction of presbyters not of a bishop. Less than a hundred years later Cyprian could say, ‘The Bishop is the Church.’ Many of the earlier features—for example, the Agape meals—recede into the background and finally disappear altogether; others are developed in fresh directions. The heathen ideas of priest and sacrifice become more prominent in the ritual of the Church; the Sacraments occupy a more central position; how long speculation was fruitful in this direction is shown by the fact that the completion of the number of the seven sacraments does not meet us till the twelfth century. The doctrine of the Trinity received its first dogmatic form from Tertullian (c. 200), but the conception of the Holy Ghost as a member of the Godhead is already developing in the Acts of the Apostles. That this last book no longer understood what was meant by the gift of tongues is clear from

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Acts 2¹⁻¹³. New features of wonder are added to the life of Christ—the Ascension to Heaven and the Descent to Hell; the latter already in 1 Pet. 3¹⁹. The worship of Mary is an original creation of this second period. According to St. Bernard, the whole Bible bears witness to Mary; this seems exaggerated; we hear little of her in Paul, and the teaching of Jesus has nothing in favour of such a cult but rather the reverse (Mk. 3³⁵). Nevertheless the development of this cult proceeded apace. That Mary was to be regarded as the mother of God was decided at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Ambrose says that Mary washed away the sin of Adam; and, according to Augustine, she alone was free from inherited sin. Benrath has observed with justice, that when the populace stormed against Nestorius for objecting to the title of ‘Mary the Mother of God,’ it was the same populace that nearly four centuries before had cried out, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians.’ Thus was heathenism avenged on its conquerors. The enthusiasm for Mary goes back at least to Justin. This cult of Mary is perhaps the most essentially heathen element in Christianity; otherwise, what Wernle says is to a great extent true, that Catholicism is the Judaising of Christianity. We find traces in the earliest

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time of the conception of the Holy Spirit as a feminine element. In the Gospel of the Hebrews Jesus speaks of the Holy Ghost as his Mother, and in the second century a sect in Southern Gaul used the baptismal formula: 'In the Name of the incomprehensible Father of the Universe; of the Truth the Mother of All; and of the Spirit which in Jesus descended for the Atonement and Redemption and Communion of the Powers.' This would give us a Trinity similar to the Egyptian Trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus. The Greek word for spirit is neuter; this may have influenced the orthodox doctrine; the Aramaic word is feminine. Traces of a more exalted position of the Holy Spirit—if one may so express oneself—are to be found perhaps in Mat. 12³¹. Soltau is anxious to show that the history of the Church shows a gradual falling away from primitive simplicity: by the time that she was ready for her bridegroom, Constantine the Great, she had been shorn of most of her early virtues: in fact, her priesthood deserves many of the denunciations which in the Gospels are the portion of the Pharisees. The Roman Emperors had long been in search of some living religious principle to give vitality to the decaying empire. More than a century before, the house of Septimius Severus

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had believed they found this principle in the worship of the God of Emesa. But the new union proved permanent, and if the Church sacrificed much, at all events the Empire was a gainer. It is the great mistake of Gibbon—otherwise the greatest of English historians—that he supposes the Church from the first to have been an element of weakness to the Empire. Exactly the reverse is the case. Gibbon treats the theological problems of the Church as meaningless trivialities; but, as a matter of fact, upon the solution of one of these problems at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 the whole fate of the Asiatic provinces of the Empire depended. If a different formula had been adopted at that Council, the Moslem invasion might never have been successful. It is worth while observing that the victory of the Church is largely due to the fact that she has always remained anti-ascetic (1 Tim. 4³). We have already seen that Paul—however inclined he may have been himself to asceticism—does not wish to impose his own practice on his converts. Jesus, too, was no teacher of asceticism (Mt. 11¹⁹). In this respect the Mandaites resembled him but not the Manicheans. Otherwise the ethics of the Church were not the ethics of Jesus, but rather those of the Stoics. The standard ethical work of

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the Middle Ages, the *De Officiis* of St. Ambrose, was based on Cicero's *De Officiis*, which, again, goes back to the Stoic Panaetius. Here Soltau is no doubt right in pointing out the difference between the precepts of the Gospels and the practice of the Church, but does he not lay too much stress on Christ's ethical teaching as the essential element in Christianity? He himself seems to see that exalted ethical teaching can be found elsewhere—in Heraclitus, Epictetus, Sirach, and Job (c. 31). Is not the corner-stone of Christ's teaching rather the Forgiveness of Sins?

Apologists.—The Apologists begin to appear about this period. The names of the most important who still survive are Aristides, Justin, and Athenagoras. The work of Aristides goes back to the reign of Hadrian (117-138), but it survives in a less complete form than those of the others. The features of this group are very similar. The atmosphere is more modern than in any other early Christian writers. Many of the arguments are such as are still commonplaces of apologetic; for example, the gods of the heathen are guilty of all kinds of iniquity; the Egyptians adore animals, and so forth. We still hear of demons and of mankind wandering after the 'elements';

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there is here perhaps a play upon words as in Jude 13. Works of healing are still appealed to; the prophetic writings of the Old Testament are in Justin one of the strongest arguments in favour of Christianity. 'That the prophets are inspired by no other than the Divine Word, even you, as I fancy, will grant,' this—addressed to Antoninus Pius—seems a bold assumption. Equally hardy is the statement of Athenagoras, who is addressing Marcus Aurelius: 'The world under your intelligent sway enjoys profound peace.' The appeal to the divine order of the universe is an indication of the Greek frame of mind: most characteristic is the attitude of respect towards Greek philosophy. This is where these Apologists differ from Tatian who retains the old hostility. That Christ was known to the patriarchs and prophets was not a new doctrine: Justin goes further and maintains that Christ was partially known even to Socrates. The conception of God reminds one of Plato more than of the Old Testament, and this is perhaps why these Apologists have been hardly dealt with by time; in fact, the services of Justin to the Church have not been recognised till quite recently. More Jewish, on the other hand, is Justin's opposition to the doctrine of re-incarnation, while he finds no difficulty in the second

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coming of Christ in the clouds. The mysteries of Dionysus and Mithras are treated as demoniacal imitations of Old Testament prophecy and New Testament sacraments. The Greek story of the virgin birth of Perseus is also borrowed by a deceiving serpent. Thus the fortresses of Greek philosophy and Greek popular beliefs are attacked, and the process of absorption proceeds apace.

V

THE GNOSTICS

Gnostics.—The Church with her new organisation and all the elements of a dogmatic system is now free to do battle with the heretics, the dreaded Gnostics. It will be necessary to describe them.

The word Gnostic is connected with a word which is identical—both in etymology and meaning—with our word ‘to know.’ The Gnostics are those who profess to have not merely faith but knowledge. The word Gnostic may perhaps best be translated ‘Illuminated.’ It is hardly a satisfactory appellation, for it is used by some of the Fathers, *e.g.*, Clement, of the Christians; naturally they did not wish to concede the sole right to this title to the heretics.

The student should remember (1) that we are indebted for much of our information about the Gnostics to their opponents, the Church Fathers; the charges made against them are often the same as those made against Christians by the

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heathen, and may have been just as unfounded; (2) we are not dealing with one sect but rather with dissentients of every complexion from the extreme right to the extreme left. In many cases they hardly deserve the name of Gnostic at all. For example Tatian, Bardesanes and Marcion are not according to Jülicher to be classified with the Gnostics. Tatian's exclusion from the Church was due to his pronounced asceticism; Bardesanes has been claimed as an orthodox Christian; Marcion's mind was active in the direction of criticism rather than mysticism; he too like the Church based salvation upon faith rather than knowledge. According to Harnack he alone understood Paul; Polycarp on the other hand—in a well-authenticated anecdote—said in answer to Marcion's salutation, 'I recognise the first-born of Satan.' Thus do doctors disagree. It is one of the most singular phenomena in history, this bitter hatred on the part of men of eminent piety, of men of blameless life whose theological views are different. The case of Polycarp and Marcion is one of the first, but the same thing recurs in Church History again and again.

The student has already seen that the Catholic Church of the second century contained new elements not to be found in the teaching of the

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Jesus of the Gospels. He is accustomed to hear that Apostolic Christianity developed into Catholic Christianity. Hence he is liable to suppose that Gnosticism is a further development of Catholic Christianity. This, however, would be a mistake; Gnostic teaching no doubt goes back to pre-Christian times. Usener and Mead suppose that Gnosticism represents the genuine Christian tradition, of which the Catholic Church was only an offshoot. Certain it is that the germs of most of the Gnostic doctrines are to be found—with careful searching—in the Gospels and Paul's epistles. In fact a study of Gnosticism helps to throw light on obscure parts of the New Testament.

It is impossible to discuss the Gnostic sects in detail. The following features are, however, common to so many of them that they may be regarded as characteristic of the group.

(1) They rejected the Old Testament and the God of the Old Testament. (Cp. Col. 2¹⁸; in Acts 7⁵³, he is described as an 'angel'; herein lies the sting of Stephen's speech.)

(2) The world, *i.e.* matter, is essentially evil; this is where the Neo-Platonists differed from the Gnostics. Plotinus—who by the bye was responsible for St. Augustine's conversion to Christianity

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—was too much of a Greek to refuse to believe in the beauty of the external world, or to admit that human beings were superior to the stars.

(3) Man, both in the body and after death—for the pre-existence of the soul and its existence after death are to be taken as a matter of course—is held in bondage by the seven planetary spirits: from the torments which they inflict Christ came to save him by imparting the mystery knowledge. The planetary spirits are perhaps the ‘stoicheia’ (‘elements,’ ‘rudiments,’) of Gal. 4³; 4⁹; Col. 2²⁰. Kohler explains the word of the planets—it certainly has that meaning in Tatian,—St. Augustine of the heavenly bodies, Dietrich of ‘demons’ generally. The English translation (‘elements,’ ‘rudiments’) conveys no meaning at all. The kosmokratores of Eph. 6¹² are also the planetary spirits. The Beelzebul of the New Testament is the (evil) planetary spirit of Saturn. Possibly Mk. 16⁹ also contains a trace of these seven spirits.

(4) The doctrine of a threefold nature is applied not only, as in orthodox Christianity, to God, but to the cosmos and man. According to the Naassenes the universe consisted of three parts ‘noeron,’ ‘psychicon,’ and ‘choicon’: *i.e.* the spiritual, the psychic, and the material. Each

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man possesses these three though he may not be conscious of them all. So, too, there are three classes of mankind named according to their progress in spiritual things, 'captive,' 'called,' and 'chosen' (cf. Mt. 20¹⁶). The first are the wicked; the second the righteous; the third the perfect or illuminated. Hence righteousness is by no means a final state. According to the Sethites the three principles are Light, Mind, and Darkness.

Such are some of the features which characterise the gnosis. In many of the sects the myth of Sophia (Wisdom) is conspicuous. This myth is variously related. The general conception is that Sophia is a being who belongs to the divine, heavenly world, but through her own fault has become entangled in the meshes of matter—the word including 'psychic' matter as well as what we call matter. In fact she is the mother of Ialdabaoth the creator of the visible universe. Sophia is the element in the soul of man which constantly aspires to a higher world; it is her cries for help that we hear in reading many of the Psalms; *e.g.*, 'Help, Lord, for the waters have gone over my soul.' These cries are heard by Christ, who redeems her from the matter in which she is imprisoned. This is the reason for the coming of Christ and the mystery of Redemption.

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Those who are restored to the Kingdom of Light are made perfect by the teaching of the mysteries; the number of these elect is limited—an idea found also in the New Testament (cp. the shutting of the door in Lk. 13²⁵), but foreign to modern Christianity. The chosen may be either righteous or sinful: here again comes the question of the efficacy of ‘works,’ ‘righteousness’—a difficulty which the Gnostics did not ignore. ‘Even for the righteous,’ says Pistis Sophia, ‘who have never done any evil, and have never sinned at all, it is necessary that they should receive the mysteries.’ On the other hand, in c. 148, ‘A man who has committed all sins and all transgressions, if he finds the Mysteries of Light and fulfils them and ceases not and sins not will be an inheritor of the treasure-house of light.’ We are reminded of Mt. 3⁷, where the Pharisees and Sadducees come to be baptized by John. Although John describes them as a generation of vipers he does not refuse to admit them to baptism. According to P. S. c. 131, it is the Lords of Destiny who are the real authors of sin, for they compel man to sin. The descent of Jesus from the upper heaven—the ‘Pleroma’—for the redemption of Sophia is the subject of the following fragment of a hymn of the Naassenes: ‘I will take the seals and I will

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descend, I will traverse the whole of the worlds, I will disclose all mysteries, and I will disclose the forms of Gods, and I will teach the hidden things of the holy path—calling it gnosis.’

It is common to speak of Gnosticism as Christianity brought under the influence of Greek philosophy. So Überweg, for example, and Anrich. Even the ancient Fathers, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus make the same remark of the Gnostics. Nevertheless this view is essentially incorrect. Let the student read their books, *Pistis Sophia* or the Adam literature translated by Preuschen from the Armenian, and form a judgment for himself. The Gnostic Isidore, son of the celebrated Basilides, accuses the Greek philosophers of stealing their doctrines from the barbarians; Aristotle, for example, had ransacked the Prophets for his teaching. Surely Isidore must be allowed to be the best judge of his indebtedness to Greek philosophy. There is hardly anything that is such a hindrance to the knowledge of the period as the idea that every one who teaches the existence of a transcendental world must have learned the doctrine from Plato. Of course we have isolated expressions, such as the passage upward from the cave; but this does not prove much, even if we suppose, as we are

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by no means obliged to suppose, that the picture is borrowed from Plato's *Republic*. So too—though we are not here speaking of Gnosticism in particular—with another doctrine of Greek philosophy, viz. the destruction of the world by fire. A. Meyer, for example, says that in this doctrine Stoic influence is practically conceded by all. But it is found before Stoicism existed, in the Old Testament in several places, *e.g.* Zeph. 3⁸; is the passage in 2 Peter 3¹⁰ more likely to have come from Stoic philosophy or the Old Testament? It is noteworthy that the most Greek of the Greek philosophers—Epicurus—was a name of abomination in our period.

As the space in this book is limited, it may be well to conclude the subject of Gnosticism with some quotations from Gnostic works. Foremost among these is *Pistis Sophia* (*i.e.* Faith Wisdom). There does not seem to be any authority for this title, and Matter and Harnack suggest that it might as well be called 'The Questions of Mary.' The original MS. appears to have been picked up in the South of Europe in the eighteenth century by Dr. Askew. It is written in Coptic, but is probably a translation from the Greek. It professes to give the teaching of Jesus delivered to his disciples during

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the eleven years *after* his resurrection. The following pieces are from Schmidt's translation:—

(1) (Mary is the speaker:) 'Moreover, with regard to the word that thou didst once say: "Think ye that I am come to bring peace upon the earth? I say unto you, Nay, but division, for from henceforth there shall be five in one house, three shall be divided against two, and two against three": this is the meaning thereof: thou hast brought into the world the mystery of baptisms, and it has brought divisions in the bodies of the world because it has separated the "Counterfeit Spirit" and Destiny and Body on one side and the Soul and the Power on the other side. That is, three shall be against two and two against three.' When Mary had thus spoken, the Saviour made answer, 'Well done, Mary, thou spiritual one, thou daughter of the pure light! This is the meaning of that word.' In this passage the Power is the Pneuma or Spirit; the counterfeit spirit is the third principle of man: Destiny is a being, external to man, who follows him throughout life till his death: each man is compelled to obey the dictates of his destiny till he is redeemed. The figure of a building (temple, dwelling-place) to represent a man—singular though it may seem—is common

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enough in the New Testament and is found in the most unexpected places, *e.g.* Jo. 2¹⁹⁻²¹; Apoc. 21². In an old Babylonian text we read of one who casts out evil spirits that 'he destroys the sanctuaries which are in the body of the sick.' We are reminded of Mk. 3²⁷; Mt. 12^{44, 45}. Usener explains the destruction of Ilion (not Troy!) by Pyrrhus as the overthrow of the sanctuary of a demon. Is the original idea here also the same as that of the Babylonian text?

2. 'Then the Saviour made answer and spake to Mary: "Verily I say unto you; everything which is intended by Destiny that a man shall do—whether it be entirely good or whether it be entirely evil—in a word everything that is ordained to befall him, doth befall him. Therefore have I brought the key of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, otherwise would no flesh in the world be saved, for without these mysteries will no one enter into the Kingdom of Light, whether he be righteous or whether he be a sinner. Therefore have I brought the keys of the mysteries into the world, in order that I may loose the sinners who shall believe in me and hear me, from all the bands and seals of the Aeons of the Principalities and bind them to the seals and garments and divisions of Light,

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so that he whom I shall loose in this world from the bands and seals of the Aeons of the Principalities may be loosed above from the bands and the seals of the Aeons of the Principalities, and that he whom in this world I bind to the seals and garments and divisions of Light, may be bound in the Land of Light to the divisions of the inheritances of Light.””

The Apocryphal Acts of John—though still more obscure than Pistis Sophia—may also help the student to understand Gnosticism.

VI

CLEMENT AND ORIGEN

Clement and Origen.—The last chapter in this sketch of early Christian ideas is the appearance of the theologians of Alexandria, Clement (*c.* 200) and Origen (*c.* 220). According to Jülicher Greek theology has ceased to be original and productive since Origen. Nevertheless Origen himself was long looked at askance, and he is generally believed to have been condemned as a heretic in the Council of 553. Clement fared better. His name was only dropped out of the martyrology by his namesake Clement VIII. (1592-1604). If Paul preached Christianity for the Gentiles, and the Apologists Christianity for the State, it may be said that Clement and Origen preached Christianity for the cultivated classes. It should be remembered that they lived at a time when culture and education were more potent factors than perhaps at any other period in the world's history. The lecture

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rooms of Clement and Origen were attended by an interested audience of educated people; as dialecticians and scholars they could rival the most celebrated heathen teachers. From this period the learned world could no longer look down upon Christians as an obscure and illiterate sect. We are reminded of the position of Scaliger in the century of the Reformation. The Catholic apologists had to admit that the most learned man of their day was an adherent of Protestantism: the modern man hardly realises the importance of this fact in the history of the struggle in the sixteenth century. E. de Faye compares our own age with that of Clement as a time of transition and advises a return to his theology. He possesses much of the mysticism of the Gnostics but does not reject the Old Testament; on the contrary Clement considers Christ as active in the Old Testament as in the New: this is quite in the spirit of the second century, cp. Heb. 11²⁶; moreover he has a place for the dialectic and rhetoric of the Greeks. On the other hand the Christianity of Clement is distinguished from the Neo-Platonists of the third century, not only by his acceptance of Revelation but also by the fact that the Neo-Platonists, Plotinus for example, had no message for the

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poor, the afflicted, and oppressed. Clement admits that God worked by means of philosophy in Greece as he had done by the prophets in Israel. The rejection of philosophy by Paul is explained to refer to Epicureanism. Faith and hope represent stages in the upward progress of man; every one is not prepared at once for the true gnosis. The soul is pre-existent in Clement, and therefore it receives only part of its discipline here. Whether Clement was a believer in reincarnation is not very clear; according to Photius (ninth century) he was a supporter of this heresy. Clement himself in Str. iv. 85 reserves the discussion of this subject for a future occasion. It is singular that though we find possible allusions to this doctrine in many places in the literature of the period, it is rarely stated with definiteness. Basilides, for example, says we are punished here for our sins in another life, but whether a life on this globe is meant or not is not clear. So, too, of the passage in the Wisdom of Solomon, 'I was a comely boy and possessed of good intelligence or rather as I had a good natural disposition already I came into a flawless body.' Origen decidedly deprecates this doctrine; in his treatise against Celsus he speaks with disapproval of Plato's views on the subject. In his com-

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mentary on Jo. 1²¹ he is less unsympathetic and speaks of the necessity of a more thorough examination into the whole question of the nature of the soul. The doctrine is unequivocally accepted in *Pistis Sophia* (cc. 108, 113), which would also thus explain Mt. 5^{25, 26}. But not only do the Alexandrians occupy a position midway between the two extremes—philosophy and Gnosticism—of their own day, they also occupy a similar position in the history of Christianity—half-way between Pauline teaching and dogmatic theology. In Origen we still read that gifts of healing had not died out; that the sensible world is not real; that there are other intelligent beings beside man, *e.g.* the stars; that each Christian is a Christ; that sin is due to possession by an evil spirit; that Spirit is a substance; that the Powers war against Christ. Origen himself was not a dignitary of the Church but only a ‘Teacher.’ But what connects Origen with the later Church is the idea that the great revelation lies in the past. The teacher is now a commentator on the written word. The Church is definitely launched upon her course. No further innovations of vital moment are to be expected.

Clement is indulgent towards all—even the

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heretic Gnostics. The Pythagoreans are half-way towards being believers. Faith and hope are for the called, but reason is of use in dealing with philosophic doubters; education is not to be condemned; on the contrary the Gnostic will be a man of deep learning (Str. vi. 82). The weak point of Clement's teaching perhaps is the indefiniteness of its end. The reasoning powers are to be used in winning the unbeliever for Faith; then the higher intellectual powers are brought into play for the purpose of subduing the emotions and passions. The intellect has then fulfilled its function and the man is passionless: what therefore remains? Even the Greek love of nature and art—though it may not represent the highest ideal—at all events offers something tangible. Clement speaks sometimes of higher teaching, which is reserved only for the perfect; but he does not tell us what it is. Another weak point, which Clement and Origen share with later Fathers, is their uncritical treatment of the Scriptures. For example, Clement explains the animals which do not divide the hoof (Lev. 11⁴), of the Jews, who do not believe in both the Father and the Son. Origen sees in the washing of the disciples' feet (Jo. 13⁶) a fulfilment of the prophecy in Is. 52⁷, 'How beautiful upon the

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mountains,' etc. Even in the New Testament the arguments based on the Old Testament are not always convincing to a modern reader, *e.g.* Heb. 7 ¹⁰, Gal. 3 ¹⁶, Acts 13 ³⁴. Nevertheless the allegoric interpretation of the Old Testament proved helpful to the nascent Church; the thoughtful element in the heathen world laid aside their attitude of indifference to the Jewish scriptures, for as Jülicher has observed, the Greeks and Romans would never have accepted a literal interpretation of Gen. 1 and 2. That was to come later; the theology of the Alexandrians was a useful and necessary stepping-stone.

Although the Alexandrians thus represent a step forward in the secularisation of the Church, this is not intended to imply that their position is an advance upon the earliest Christianity. It would hardly be necessary to speak of this were it not that many writers of popular philosophical works seem to speak of the successive stages of Christianity as though they represented an advance upon the earlier beliefs. For example we read in Hort-Mayor: 'Aristotle has his defects no doubt, but to him and to the other ancient moralists we are indebted for an indispensable supplement to the Bible, in so far as they make explicit what in it is still implicit' (p. 28): 'The

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emotional and physical accompaniments of the first reception of the Gospel were mere passing phenomena, perhaps unavoidable, anyhow not to be encouraged': 'The Jewish conception of God and of man needed to be supplemented by the Greek conception, just as in later ages the ecclesiastical conception of God is continually widened and modified by the scientific conception.' It is to be observed that the authors speak of the 'Jewish conception,' but, according to Hort's own belief, the founder of Christianity was the Son of God; did his conception of God require to be supplemented by Greek conceptions? Is the 'ecclesiastical' conception, *e.g.* of Boniface VIII., John XXII., and Pius V., an improvement on the other two? And what is the 'scientific' conception? Why should the authors not describe it, and then we should see how it both 'widens' and 'modifies' at the same time. A book like this is not intended for controversial matter, but the student is warned not to suppose that anything advanced by Hort-Mayor is likely to weaken the positions of Hatch and Harnack, against whom their polemic is directed. The English student is rarely aware of the change that has been brought about in philosophy on the Continent by the works of Schopenhauer and

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Eduard v. Hartmann; most of what is called philosophy in England is nothing but the elaborate and elusive phraseology in which an obsolete theology is re-stated.

In order to understand what a difference it made to Christianity, when Clement won for it the attention of the educated world, it is necessary to draw the attention of the non-classical student to the prominence of rhetorical studies in antiquity. The feud between rhetoric and philosophy—the stylists and the thinkers—dates from the fifth century B.C., and is carried on with unabated zeal till the extinction of classical literature. Poetry, it should be observed, is only a branch of rhetoric in the larger sense of the word. The rhetoricians boldly maintained that they took all knowledge for their province—philosophy, therefore, along with the rest; the philosophers replied that if a statement were true it did not matter whether it was expressed well or not. The classical student will call to mind the *Gorgias* of Plato and the *Clouds* of Aristophanes. Only those who are familiar with the subtleties of the Greek and Latin languages will understand what an acute question this might become. After the period we have reached, the Church can produce writings capable of satisfy-

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ing the fastidious taste of an educated audience. The New Testament was notoriously written in the everyday language of the people; it is only quite recently that this has been made clear by the recovery of numerous contemporary documents. Our own English translation is the noblest monument of our prose, and we are far, therefore, from realising that the Greek original was the opposite of a finished literary document. The opposition between rhetoricians and philosophers is reflected in later times in the existence, side by side, of the two orders of clergy and monks. Not that all monks were philosophers, but the ideal of monkdom—the contemplative life—was essentially a philosophic ideal; the glory of the bishop was to attract a fashionable audience to his sermons. It is quite in accordance with this distinction that when the revival of learning, *i.e.* rhetoric, came, the monks were loudest in their opposition.

The writings of Origen were the source of lively controversies after his death. As we have seen, he was excluded from the fold of orthodoxy in the sixth century—not till he had infused elements of permanent value into the theology of the Church. Amongst others Athanasius warmly defended him. The wonder is that he

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remained uncondemned so long. The later Catholic conception of Christianity was limited and confined: the World created a few millenniums since by an Almighty God, Man formed for obedience to the Divine Will, the Word made Flesh, Salvation in the bosom of the Church, a speedy Last Judgment with eternal life for the righteous and eternal condemnation of the wicked. In this world of thought there was no room for Origen. How could the Church accept the pre-existence of the soul and its restitution to original holiness; the thought of the human body as a penalty for sin; a cosmic Christ passing through all orders of being, suffering for each as for men; the destruction of the body at the Last Judgment--the future bodies of the saved, according to Origen, will be circular; the doctrine that all rational existences will ultimately become merged in unity, and material existence will be brought to nothing: that the end of all things will be the same as the beginning?¹ According to Epiphanius, Origen believed that even the devil would be restored to his former glory and made equal with Christ. The Church could not afford to dispense with the doctrine of the 'outer darkness with weeping and

¹ Partly from Westcott.

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gnashing of teeth'—a doctrine which appears with added terrors in *Pistis Sophia*. To the Alexandrians the punishments of the future world were intended to refine and purify; the Church has skilfully superimposed this doctrine—the place of purification appears as Purgatory—upon the original doctrine of Eternal Torment. In addition to Purgatory we read in Origen of a river of fire surrounding Paradise which none could pass through till Christ's redeeming work was complete. This river or furnace of fire is still distinguished from Purgatory in the Poem of Dante.

Such is an outline of some of the characteristic conceptions of early Christianity. Much light has been thrown in recent times on old problems; nevertheless many questions still remain open. Such are: The relation of Paul to Jesus; the relation of Pauline Christianity to pre-Christian 'thiasoi' or colleges uniting in a common worship (cp. Acts 18²⁵; 19¹); the relation of the Fourth Gospel to Judaism and to Paul; the position of the Apocalypse of John in the early development of Christianity. With the help of the books mentioned in the Bibliography the student will be able to pursue these lines of investigation for himself.

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The author has been under obligations to very many of the writers mentioned; in a small work like the present, which makes no pretence to originality, it has been impossible to acknowledge each obligation separately: works to which the author is most indebted are marked (*c*).

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